

Remarks

In the Office Action dated July 9, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-11, 14, 15 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by PCT reference WO99/64224 (corresponding to issued U.S. Patent No. 6,537,413). The Examiner rejected claims 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the PCT reference in view of the U.S. Patent to Edwards, et al. 5,891,560.

Initially, the present invention is a reinforced composite vehicle load floor of the sandwich-type having a cellular core. Among other things, the load floor includes an upper skeletal frame structure of reinforcing slats as well as a lower skeletal frame structure of reinforcing slats. The load floor is capable of supporting 240 pounds of weight over 100 square inches with not more than 10 mm of deflection.

Clearly, the PCT reference (i.e., U.S. Patent No. 6,537,413) fails to disclose a reinforced composite vehicle load floor as asserted by the Examiner. Rather, the PCT reference merely discloses seatbacks for rear seats in motor vehicles and, in particular, to seatbacks of such rear seats wherein seat belts are fitted to the seatbacks as noted at column 6, lines 17-19 of the corresponding issued U.S. Patent. Figures 2a through 2g of the issued U.S. patent are diagrammatic plan views of test pieces (i.e., seatbacks). Clearly, seatbacks are not vehicle load floors and, consequently, the PCT reference does not disclose a load floor capable of supporting 240 pounds of weight over 100 square inches with not more than 10 mm of deflection.

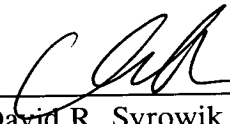
Also, claim 1 clearly calls for upper and lower skeletal frame structures of reinforcing slats. This is to be contrasted with the reinforcing plies of the PCT reference. The reinforcing plies are noted in column 2, lines 9-18 of the corresponding issued U.S. patent as one-directional mats or woven fabrics of glass fibers or carbon fibers or of natural fibers embedded in a thermal settable resin with an orientation that is determined by the orientation of the stresses.

None of the other references of record taken either alone or in combination with the PCT reference teach, disclose or discuss the subject matter of independent claim 1.

Consequently, in view of the above and in the absence of better art Applicant's Attorney respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance which allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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